

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 AID-05

IO-10 DLOS-05 ACDA-10 /097 W
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R 161450Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

TO SECSTATE WAHSDC 8820

INFO AMCONSUL ADANA

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AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

CINCUSAFE

EUCOM

UNCLAS ANKARA 3013

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PINT TU US

SUBJ: TURKISH PRESS REACTION TO HELSTOSKI RESOLUTION
AND GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS

REF: (A) ANKARA 2922 (NOTAL) (B) ANKARA 2972

1. THE TURKISH PRESS APRIL 16 GAVE PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THE RECENT ADOPTION BY THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE HELSTOSKI RESOLUTION REFERRING TO THE ARMENIAN MASSACRES OF 1915. THE FOLLOWING ARE EXAMPLES OF HEADLINES FROM SOME OF THE LEADING PAPERS:

A. MODERATELY-LEFTIST CUMHURIYET: "THE AMERICAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS APPROVED A NEW RESOLUTION AGAINST THE TURKS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF THE ARMENIAN MINORITY..."

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B. MASS-CIRCULATION GUNAYDIN: "THE AMERICAN CONGRESS IS REVIVING OLD EVENTS IN ORDER TO ANGER TURKEY."

C. LIBERAL MILLIYET: "THE U.S. CONGRESS HAS PROCLAIMED APRIL 24 AS THE DAY "MAN'S INHUMANITY TO MAN" -- U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT HAS DELETED THE WORDS "TURKS" AND "TURKEY" FROM THE CONGRESSIONAL DRAFT."

2. MOST PRESS ACCOUNTS, WHICH WERE BASED ON WIRE SERVICE REPORTS, ERRONEOUSLY IDENTIFIED HOUSE MAJORITY LEADER THOMAS O'NEILL AS THE AUTHOR OF THE RESOLUTION. REPORTEDLY THE DRAFT RESOLUTION DECLARED THAT THE ARMENIANS IN TURKEY WERE MASSACRED IN 1915 AND INDICATED THAT THE TURKS WERE A NATION WHICH KILLED THE ARMENIANS "WITHOUT MERCY." HOWEVER, THE NEWS ACCOUNT CONTINUED, THE WORDS "TURK" AND "TURKEY" WERE DELETED FROM THE RESOLUTION ON THE REQUEST OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. A DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN WAS QUOTED AS SAYING: "WE FOUND THE ENTIRE DRAFT UNCONSTRUCTIVE FROM THE STANDPOINT OF OUR RELATIONS WITH TURKEY. WE WERE AWARE OF THE FACT THAT SUCH A DRAFT RESOLUTION WOULD MAKE TURKEY ANGRIER, SINCE IT HAD ALREADY BEEN OFFENDED BY THE MILITARY AID CUTOFF. TO ATTEMPT TO REVIVE MEMORIES OF EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED 60 YEARS AGO WOULD HURT OUR RELATIONS WITH TURKEY FURTHER."

3. COLUMNIST ERDOGAN ALKAN (GUNAYDIN) COMMENTED APRIL 16 THAT SOME ARMENIAN BUSINESSMEN HAD PROVOKED THE ARMENIANS INTO A CIVIL WAR WHICH RESULTED IN THE DEATHS OF MANY TURKS, AS WELL AS ARMENIANS. ACCORDING TO ALKAN, THE "TRUE OBJECTIVE" OF CONGRESSMEN O'NEILL AND HELSTOSKI IS TO "WIN THE VOTES OF AMERICAN CITIZENS OF GREEK ORIGIN".

4. THE APRIL 16 TURKISH PRESS ALSO GAVE FAIRLY PROMINENT COVERAGE TO THREE STORIES CONCERNING TURKISH-GREEK RELATIONS:

A. MOST PAPERS REPORTED GREEK PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS'S REJOINDER TO TURKISH PRIME MINISTER SULEYMAN DEMIREL (REF B) REGARDING CARAMANLIS'S RECENT INTERVIEW IN THE FRENCH DAILY LE MONDE.

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B. SEVERAL LEADING DAILIES (GUNAYDIN, MILLIYET, TERCUMAN, AND OTHERS) REPORTED GREEK DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF'S STATEMENT PUBLISHED IN THE BRITISH NEWS MAGAZINE SPECTATOR TO THE EFFECT THAT WHICHEVER SIDE FIRST TRIES TO CROSS THE RIVER MERIC (SEPARATING GREEK AND TURKISH THRACE) FOR AGGRESSIVE PURPOSES IS "CRAZY." AVEROFF ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID THE FORMER GREEK JUNTA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR BRINGING ABOUT THE PRESENT CONFRONTATION BETWEEN

GREECE AND TURKEY.

C. ALSO, THE MASS-CIRCULATION DAILY GUNAYDIN SAID THAT
UNNAMED TURKISH OFFICIALS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT TURKEY WOULD
NOT (RPT NOT) HESITATE TO RETALIATE AGAINST ANY GREEK MOVE TO
INCREASE ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS IN THE AEGEAN TO TWELVE MILES,
AND THAT THERE WAS NO DIFFERENCE OF OPINION ON THIS SUBJECT AMONG
DIFFERENT TURKISH CABINETS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HUMAN RIGHTS, WAR CRIMES, PRESS SUMMARIES, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, RESOLUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ANKARA03013
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750134-0754
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750443/aaaabodr.tel
Line Count: 124
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 ANKARA 2922, 75 (NOTAANKARA 2972
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ShawDG
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <02 JUL 2003 by MarshK0>; APPROVED <28 JAN 2004 by ShawDG>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TURKISH PRESS REACTION TO HELSTOSKI RESOLUTION AND GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TU, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006